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E.O. 12356: DECL: OADR
TAGS: PREL, CU, US, XK, OREP
SUBJ: CODEL SOLARZ' MEETING WITH CASTRO

1. (S- ENTIRE TEXT)

2. SUMMARY: CASTRO TOLD SOLARZ THAT THE SALVADORAN GUERRILLAS HAVE WON, THAT ELEMENTS IN THE SALVADORAN MILITARY IN RECOGNITION OF THIS FACT WILL STAGE A COUP BEFORE THE ELECTIONS IN ORDER TO ENTER INTO NEGOTIATIONS TO ESTABLISH AN INTERIM GOVERNMENT, AND THAT THE USG WILL INTERVENE MILITARILY AT THAT POINT. ON RELATIONS WITH THE USG, HE WOULD THEORETICALLY AGREE TO STOP SUPPORTING AND ORGANIZING LIBERATION MOVEMENTS IN RETURN FOR AN END TO THE EMBARGO, BUT THE REAGAN ADMINISTRATION WILL NEVER NEGOTIATE WITH CUBA. WHILE HE WOULD ACCEPT THE RETURN OF THE MARIEL EXCLUDABLES HE WOULD ONLY DO SO IN THE CONTEXT OF A GENERAL US/CUBAN SETTLEMENT. HE GAVE A CONTRADICTORY ASSESSMENT OF THE SANDINISTAS. FINALLY, CASTRO ADMITTED THAT CUBAN TROOPS HAVE BEEN WITHDRAWN FROM ETHIOPIA AND HAVE BEEN SENT TO ANGOLA. END SUMMARY.

3. INTRODUCTION: CODEL SOLARZ AND HIS STAFF MET WITH FIDEL CASTRO DURING THE EVENING OF JANUARY 26 FOR FOUR HOURS. THE CONGRESSMAN PROVIDED ME WITH THE HIGHLIGHTS OF HIS CONVERSATION WHILE WAITING AT THE AIRPORT TO DEPART HAVANA SHORTLY AFTER THE MEETING. THE FOLLOWING POINTS ARE ONLY A PARTIAL SUMMARY OF THE CONVERSATION GIVEN THE TIME CONSTRAINTS AND THE CIRCUMSTANCES UNDER WHICH I DEBRIEFED HIM. GIVEN THE SUBJECT MATTER COVERED BY THE CASTRO/SOLARZ CONVERSATION, THE DEPARTMENT MAY WISH TO FURTHER DEBRIEF THE CONGRESSMAN.

4. ACCORDING TO SOLARZ, CASTRO WAS IN VINTAGE FORM, POSSESSED OF A TREMENDOUS RANGE OF FACTS AND EXUDING CONFIDENCE AND CHARM. FROM THIS TONE, AS WELL AS FROM HIS SPECIFIC REMARKS, IT WOULD CERTAINLY APPEAR THAT THAT CASTRO IS CONTINUING IN HIS EFFORTS TO BOLSTER

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OPPONENTS OF THE ADMINISTRATION'S POLICIES IN CENTRAL AMERICA AND THEREBY CONSTRAIN THE ADMINISTRATION. INDICATIVE OF THE IMPORTANCE CASTRO GIVES TO THIS EFFORT IS THE FACT THAT HE FAILED TO APPEAR AT THE INDIAN AMBASSADOR'S NATIONAL DAY RECEPTION IN ORDER TO CONTINUE THE CONVERSATION WITH SOLARZ. ALL ARRANGEMENTS HAD BEEN MADE AT THE INDIAN EMBASSY BY CUBAN SECURITY FOR HIS PRESENCE AND WERE VISIBLE TO ALL PARTICIPANTS. GIVEN INDIA'S CURRENT ROLE AS NAM PRESIDENT, CASTRO HAD A CERTAIN OBLIGATION TO ATTEND AND FAILURE TO DO SO RAISED MANY EYEBROWS. NEVERTHELESS, HE CHOSE SOLARZ.

END INTRODUCTION.

5. RELATIONS WITH THE U.S.

SOLARZ ASKED CASTRO WHETHER HE COULD ACCEPT A U.S./CUBAN ACCOMMODATION IN WHICH HE CEASED SUPPORTING GUERRILLA GROUPS THROUGHOUT THE REGION AND ELSEWHERE IN RETURN FOR FULL FORMALIZATION OF RELATIONS AND AN END TO THE EMBARGO. SOLARZ SAID THAT IN PHRASING HIS QUESTION HE EXPLICITLY ASKED WHETHER CASTRO WOULD STOP TRAINING ARMING, AND DIRECTING SUCH GUERRILLA GROUPS. CASTRO REPLIED THAT IN THEORY HE COULD ACCEPT SUCH ACCOMMODATION AND WOULD ABIDE BY THE "INTERNATIONAL PRINCIPLE OF NON-INTERVENTION." HE WOULD, HOWEVER, HAVE TO RETAIN THE RIGHT OF PROVIDING POLITICAL SUPPORT FOR GUERRILLA GROUPS. HAVING THUS ACCEPTED THE THEORETICAL POSSIBILITY OF ACCOMMODATION, CASTRO THEN EXPOUNDED UPON HIS THEME OF THE PAST MONTH -- NO ACCOMMODATION IS, IN FACT, POSSIBLE WITH THE REAGAN ADMINISTRATION BECAUSE OF ITS IDEOLOGICAL OBSTINANCY AND ITS TOTAL OPPOSITION TO CUBA. INTERNAL COMMENT: FROM THESE REMARKS, IT WOULD APPEAR THAT CASTRO WAS SAYING HE WOULD ACCEPT AN APPROACH FOR NEGOTIATIONS MADE BY THE USG BUT DID NOT CONSIDER SUCH AN APPROACH LIKELY. THAT IS, HE WAS MANEUVERING TO PLACE US IN A DEMANDEUR POSITION. THIS POSTURING WOULD, OF COURSE, BE CONSISTENT WITH OTHER RECENT INFORMATION RECEIVED ABOUT HIS INTENTIONS (SEE HAVANA 474 NODIS). SOLARZ, HOWEVER, DID NOT HAVE THE IMPRESSION THAT CASTRO WAS MANEUVERING IN THIS MANNER. END COMMENT.

6. SOLARZ ALSO ASKED CASTRO ABOUT HIS WILLINGNESS TO ACCEPT THE RETURN OF THE MARIEL EXCLUDABLES. CASTRO REPLIED THAT THEIR RETURN WAS THEORETICALLY POSSIBLE BUT THAT DISCUSSIONS ON THE SUBJECT WOULD HAVE TO TAKE PLACE WITHIN THE GENERAL CONTEXT OF IMMIGRATION MATTERS. HE THEN WENT BEYOND THIS POSITION (WHICH HAS BEEN LAID OUT IN THE CUBAN NOTES TO US ON THE SUBJECT) TO ASSERT THAT NO RETURN WAS POSSIBLE UNTIL THERE WAS A GENERAL

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CUBAN/US ACCOMMODATION. SOLARZ ALSO ASKED CASTRO IF HE WOULD RELEASE ADDITIONAL POLITICAL PRISONERS IF THE UNITED STATES EXPRESSED A WILLINGNESS TO ADMIT THEM AS IMMIGRANTS. CASTRO SIMPLY REPLIED THAT THE U.S. HAD RENEGED ON ITS COMMITMENT TO TAKE POLITICAL PRISONERS THE LAST TIME HE HAD DONE SO.

7. EL SALVADOR

CASTRO REPEATED HIS RECENT THEME THAT THE GUERRILLAS HAVE WON THE WAR. HE ALSO SAID, HOWEVER, THAT HE HAS DOCUMENTAL PROOF, WHICH HE CANNOT RELEASE, THAT THE SALVADORAN ARMY IS IN CONTACT WITH THE GUERRILLAS LOOKING TOWARDS A NEGOTIATED SETTLEMENT. ACCORDING TO CASTRO, ELEMENTS IN THE ARMY ARE PLANNING A COUP BEFORE

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THE ELECTIONS IN ORDER TO ENTER INTO NEGOTIATIONS TO ESTABLISH AN INTERIM GOVERNMENT WITH INSURGENT PARTICIPATION. APPARENTLY AT THIS POINT AT THIS POINT IN THE CONVERSATION SOLARZ ASKED HOW LONG SUCH AN INTERIM GOVERNMENT WOULD LAST, SUGGESTING THAT SEVERAL MONTHS MIGHT BE NECESSARY TO PREPARE THE ELECTIONS. CASTRO REJOINED BY SAYING ELECTIONS MIGHT BE POSSIBLE AFTER THE INTERIM GOVERNMENT WAS IN POWER FOR TWO OR THREE YEARS. IMPLICITLY CONTRADICTING THIS LOOK INTO THE FUTURE, CASTRO ALSO SAID THAT WHEN THE SALVADORAN ARMY COLLAPSES, OR STAGES A COUP, THE USG WILL INTERVENE MILITARILY. INTERNAL COMMENT: BY POINTING TO THE CERTAINTY OF USG INTERVENTION, CASTRO HOPES TO GENERATE OPPOSITION TO SUCH A DEVELOPMENT AND THEREBY HEAD IT OFF. HIS LINE IS NOW WELL ESTABLISHED. MORE INTERESTING IN THIS CONVERSATION IS HIS VIEW OF AN INTERIM GOVERNMENT. IT WOULD HARDLY BE ACCURATE TO APPLY THE PHRASE "POWER-SHARING" TO SUCH AN ENTITY. HE CLEARLY SEES AN INSURGENT-DOMINATED AND RUN GOVERNMENT. REGARDING THE ALLEGED IMPENDING COUP, SOLARZ CHALLENGED CASTRO BY SAYING HE UNCOVERED NO SUCH EVIDENCE WHILE IN EL SALVADOR. CASTRO REPLIED THAT HE HAD THE PROOF BUT COULD NOT DISCLOSE IT. END COMMENT.

8. NICARAGUA

CASTRO BOTH ACKNOWLEDGED THE SUCCESS OF THE PRESSURE BEING BROUGHT ON NICARAGUA AND DISCUSSED USG EFFORTS TO INFLUENCE NICARAGUA. ACCORDING TO SOLARZ, HE RATHER SCORNFULLY ACKNOWLEDGED THE SANDINISTAS' WILLINGNESS TO TERMINATE ASSISTANCE TO THE FMLN-FDR. HE ASSERTED THAT THEY, AND -- BY OBVIOUS IMPLICATION -- CUBA, HAVE A MORAL OBLIGATION TO SUPPORT IN EVERY WAY THE OPPONENTS OF THE "GENOCIDAL SALVADORAN REGIME." BUT THE PRESSURE EXISTS AND THE SANDINISTAS FEEL THEY HAVE TO ACCOMMODATE IT. BUT CASTRO ALSO SAID THAT THE USG COULD GIVE THE CONTRAS AS MANY ARMS AS IT WISHED. IT WOULD NOT MATTER. THE SANDINISTAS WILL EASILY HANDLE THE CONTRAS. FINALLY, CASTRO DISMISSED ELECTIONS IN NICARAGUA BY SAYING THAT THE USG WILL REGRET THE DAY IT PUSHED THE SANDINISTAS INTO CARRYING OUT SUCH ELECTIONS BECAUSE THE PROCESS WILL ONLY END IN THE FULL LEGITIMIZATION OF THE SANDINISTAS.

9. CONTADORA PROCESS

ACCORDING TO SOLARZ, CASTRO WAS NOT POSITIVE ABOUT THE CONTADORA PROCESS. IN CASTRO'S ANALYSIS, THE PROCESS HAS BEEN GOING IN THE WRONG DIRECTION FOR SEVERAL MONTHS. IT DOES NOT ATTEMPT TO GRAPPLE WITH THE HEART OF THE CENTRAL AMERICAN CRISIS, WHICH IS THE SALVADORAN INSURGENCY. INSTEAD, IT IS ATTEMPTING TO PRESSURE THE SANDINISTAS.

10. THE REST OF LATIN AMERICA

CASTRO APPARENTLY EXPOUNDED AT GREAT LENGTH ABOUT THE ECONOMIC CRISIS IN LATIN AMERICA. IN THIS CONTEXT HE DISPLAYED GREAT CONTEMPT FOR THE RESURGENCE OF DEMOCRATIC GOVERNMENTS AND DEMOCRATIC LEADERS IN THE REGION. AT LENGTH HE ASKED SOLARZ HOW MUCH GOVERNMENTS AND MEN CAN RESOLVE THE DEBT PROBLEM AND OTHER DEVELOPMENTAL ISSUES WITHOUT UNDERTAKING PROFOUND SOCIAL REFORM. HE REPEATEDLY EXPRESSED THE WISH THAT, HAD HE THE RESOURCES OF BRAZIL OR ARGENTINA, HE WOULD BE ABLE TO USE SUCH RESOURCES IN SUPPORT OF PROFOUND CHANGE.

11. CUBA, ETHIOPIA, ANGOLA

IN RESPONSE TO A DIRECT QUESTION FROM SOLARZ, CASTRO

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SAID THAT THE CUBAN TROOPS WITHDRAWN FROM ETHIOPIA HAD BEEN SENT TO ANGOLA TO SHORE UP THE DOS SANTOS REGIME.

INTERNAL COMMENT: ALTHOUGH CASTRO ASKED SOLARZ NOT TO DISCLOSE THIS INFORMATION, HE, OF COURSE, KNEW THAT HE WOULD PASS IT ALONG. I ASSUME, THEREFORE, THAT THE CUBANS WILL SOON PUBLICLY ADMIT TO THE TROOP REMOVAL.

12. GENERAL COMMENT: THERE ARE MORE THAN A FEW INTERNAL INCONSISTENCIES WITH CASTRO'S REMARKS AS SOLARZ RELATED THEM AND I HAVE ATTEMPTED TO REPEAT THEM ABOVE. IN PART, THAT MAY BE DUE TO THE SECOND HAND RENDERING OF THE CONVERSATION AND THE HURRIED CONDITIONS UNDER WHICH THAT RENDERING WAS MADE. BUT MORE IMPORTANT, THE CONTRADICTIONS PROBABLY STEM FROM THE FACT THAT CASTRO MAY ALSO BE WORKING FROM PARTIAL INFORMATION ABOUT CENTRAL AMERICA DEVELOPMENTS. WORKING THROUGH ARGUMENTS PUT TO THIRD PARTIES, HE IS ATTEMPTING TO HEAD OFF US MILITARY INTERVENTION. IN ORDER TO PROMPT SUCH THIRD PARTIES INTO ACTION, HE HAS TO CARRY HIS ANALYSIS TO THE EXTREME. AT THAT POINT, CONTRADICTIONS BECOME INEVITABLE.
FERCH

END OF MESSAGE

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